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AFRL announces new chief technologist

by 1st Lt. Morgan J. O'Brien III, AFRL Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — The Air Force Research Laboratory, headquartered at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, introduced new chief technologist, Dr. Thomas A. Cruse on January 5.

In his new post, Dr. Cruse serves as the primary advisor on science and technology and primary authority for the technical content and quality of the science and technology portfolio to the AFRL commander.

"Dr. Cruse joins us from Vanderbilt University under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act," said Major General Paul D. Nielsen, AFRL commander. "I am excited about the tremendous motivation, broad experience and professionalism he brings to AFRL."

Prior to serving as both private consultant and professor emeritus of mechanical engineering at Vanderbilt, Dr. Cruse's nine years of teaching at the school were as the H. Fort Flowers Professor of Mechanical Engineering.

Dr. Cruse's Air Force resume boasts a broad range of involvement. He has served on seven Air Force Scientific Advisory Board S&T Quality reviews involving four AFRL Technology Directorates, chairing one. "My SAB experiences with AFRL made me an enthusiastic supporter of what AFRL does and the quality of the personnel in the lab," Dr. Cruse said.

With ties to AFRL through a couple of predecessor organizations, Dr. Cruse anticipates his experiences prepare him for the new position. "I have a long research connection with the Air Force," said Dr. Cruse, who worked with the Air Force Materials Lab while a professor at Carnegie Mellon, the Aeropropulsion Lab while at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, and with both the Propulsion and Air Vehicles Directorates while a program manager for probabilistic design at Southwest Research Institute.

The relocation to Dayton marks a return to Ohio for Dr. Cruse. During World War II, his father worked as a foreman building B-24s for the Goodyear Company in Akron. His father's jobs required several moves during his childhood. These moves took him to various homes in Indiana and Ohio and eventually, southern California.

Dr. Cruse earned an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering and a master's degree in engineering mechanics from Stanford University, Palo Alto, Calif. He received a doctorate in engineering mechanics from the University of Washington in Seattle.

"Dr. Cruse's appointment acknowledges his exceptional executive leadership ability and strong background from his experience in academia," General Nielsen said, "The position calls for him to analyze and integrate multiple complex technical programs and to lead a diverse collection of professional scientists and engineers."

Dr. Cruse is enthusiastic about coming to AFRL. "My principle goal is to help AFRL's directorates achieve or maintain world-class research in support of the Air Force's mission. I view my job as a facilitator, communicator and hopefully, stimulator," he said.

In his free time, Dr. Cruse is an instrument-rated private pilot who enjoys the outdoors. He and his wife backpack, raft, ski and fly fish near their permanent home of Pagosa Springs, Col.

Under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act, Dr. Cruse will serve a two-year term, which is renewable for one additional term. @



Dr. Thomas A. Cruse